



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Just like the famous book title, some people *can* travel around the world in 80 days. But here at AOT, we can do it in 96 hours!

That's because we are attending the Travel Industry Association's International Pow Wow event, May 31 – June 4, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada. During these four days, AOT and several of our industry partners will meet and greet more than 1,500 international and domestic travel professionals and tour operators from around the globe.

Our goal is simple: to encourage these travel representatives to promote the Grand Canyon State as the premier tourist destination. I look forward to sharing insights on this extraordinary travel and trade show in a future issue of AOT in Action. For now, I'm off to see if Elvis has left the building...

To learn more about TIA's International Pow Wow, visit www.tia.org.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director

AOT News Flash

There is Still Time to Nominate your Favorites in the Tourism Industry!

Due to technical difficulties with our first notification, we have been asked to extend the deadline to submit nominations for the **2008 Governor's Tourism Awards to 5:00pm on Friday, June 6, 2008.**

The Governor's Tourism Awards are the premier industry awards honoring individuals and organizations that have made noteworthy contributions during the past year for the betterment of the tourism industry. The award recipients are excellent examples of leadership, commitment and teamwork that make the Grand Canyon State a premier travel destination.

The awards will be presented at the 28th Annual Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa in Tucson on July 10, 2008.

Please visit the [Governor's Conference on Tourism](#) section of www.azot.gov for award categories, guidelines and nomination forms. For more information, contact Kiva Couchon at 602-364-3724 or via e-mail at kcouchon@azot.gov.

To register for the conference please visit, www.aztourismconference.com.

Last Chance to Attend Grand Impressions Workshop!

The Grand Impressions workshop is a full day of education and training designed to empower tourism and visitor services professionals by offering:

- A customer service training program, featuring unique ways to get you and your staff to think "outside the jar" - if you miss this opportunity, you'll be green with envy!
- An amazing presentation on Arizona tourism attractions by Brian Lang.
- A tour of the Flagstaff's Lowell Observatory and a visit to the Flagstaff Arboretum, complete with a Live Birds of Prey Demonstration by the High Country Raptors.

Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion, a complimentary lunch and free resource materials from presenters. **(Community and Attractions attendees: Please feel free to bring your information to share with participants.)**

The Grand Impressions workshop is free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as seating is limited. For more information, or to make a reservation for the workshop, contact Meghan Dorn at **602-364-3708** or mdorn@azot.gov.

Workshop Date and Location:

Flagstaff, Arizona

June 6, 2008

Grand Impressions Workshop

[Lowell Observatory](#)

1400 W. Mars Hill Road

Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Phone: 928-233-3210

- Local Visitor Information Center Managers please arrive at 8:30 a.m.
- All other participants please arrive at 9:30 a.m.
- Workshop will conclude at 5 p.m.

AOT Plans for 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide Publication

The Arizona Office of Tourism's Travel Industry Marketing division is publishing the 2009 *Professional Travel Planner's Guide*. PTPG is the official fulfillment publication for the division. This comprehensive statewide guide assists tour operators and travel agents in the U.S. and in key international countries as they create group and individual tour packages throughout Arizona.

With an annual circulation of 25,000, PTPG is distributed by AOT's international offices (Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, and Mexico) at domestic and international trade shows, and at national promotional events. It is also direct-mailed to clients in AOT's database, as well as in response to client inquiries. Additionally, PTPG will be available for instant download on AOT's Web site.

PTPG includes extensive itineraries, maps, events, motorcoach, and tour information designed to identify operators' needs and educate them on the range and diversity of destinations, attractions and facilities in Arizona. The publication also includes Resource Guides with Directory Listings for the following categories.

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Restaurants
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Transportation

For additional information and to obtain a media kit, contact Kathleen Lockhart of Hennen Publishing and Marketing Group at kathleen@hennenpmg.com or at 480-664-0541.

AOT's Research Director Asked to Serve on International Board

Congratulations to AnnDee Johnson, AOT's Research and Strategic Planning Director! She was recently elected to serve on the Travel and Tourism Research Association Board of Directors, an internationally recognized organization for tourism research and strategic planning. Her three-year term begins June 2008. We look forward to AnnDee's participation with this group and benefiting from the latest travel and tourism research data.

Trippin' with AOT

AOT Hosts White Mountains Press Trip

The Arizona Office of Tourism recently hosted the White Mountains Press Trip in which six travel writers discovered the beauty, diversity and wonder of the White Mountains region of the Grand Canyon State. The writers, who hailed from Ireland, Germany and the U.S., enjoyed a historic tour of Snowflake-Taylor, a nature hike at Sipe Wildlife Area and a picnic lunch at Tonto Natural Bridge. The group also discovered such Arizona treasures as X Diamond Ranch, Woods Canyon Lake, the Petrified Forest and La Posada Hotel in Winslow. The five-day media tour wrapped up in Phoenix where the group was treated to a day of luxury and relaxation at The

Westin Kierland Resort & Spa. For more information, contact Erica Rich at 602-364-3698 or via e-mail at erich@azot.gov.

Industry News

Survey: 1 in 6 will Spend Stimulus Check on Travel

According to the results of the April TravelHorizons survey, which the Ypartnership co-authored with the Travel Industry Association, one out of six (16 percent) rebate recipients is planning to spend some portion of the funds on an overnight or day trip for leisure purposes. Ten percent plan to use some portion of the rebate to take an overnight trip, while 6 percent plan to use some portion of the funds to enjoy a day trip. Almost half of those who plan an overnight or day trip intend to use some portion of the rebate to pay for lodging accommodations, and one out of four plans to apply some portion of the rebate to the purchase of an airline ticket. If these intentions come to fruition, the recipients who plan to spend some portion of their rebate on an overnight and/or day trip will pump an estimated \$12 billion into the U.S. economy. Details at www.ypartnership.com. *(Special to TA)*

Study Finds Traditional Travel Agent in Comeback

The traditional travel agent appears to be making a comeback, according to Ypartnership's 2008 National Leisure Travel Monitor report. According to the findings, leisure travelers have been more likely to use a traditional travel agent this year--to obtain travel information and prices, or to make a reservation--than last year. In 2008, nearly two in 10 leisure travelers used a travel agent to obtain information and prices, or to make a reservation. Among those seeking information/reservations for airlines and hotels, the number of travelers who used a traditional travel agent is even higher--three in 10. In addition, three in 10 airline/hotel travelers are planning to use a traditional travel agent during the next 12 months. These findings represent an increase of five percentage points over last year. (www.TravelTrade.com, 5/27)

Tour Travelers Want More Choices: Says Survey

Flexibility and choice, "authentic experiences," and the ability to customize a trip are what people want most in tours and vacation packages, according to a member survey conducted by the U.S. Tour Operators Association (USTOA). Value for the dollar, enhanced service and new destinations were other elements cited by USTOA members, who send 11 million travelers on vacation yearly. "People are asking for more free time, more shopping, and greater choice," said Bob Whitley, USTOA president. He added: "Tours today are answering that demand by balancing free time with sightseeing so that there is plenty of freedom for on-your-own activities." Mr. Whitley said that travelers also want centrally located hotels for easy access to major sites they can explore on their own. Other desired elements of group travel include customization or tailoring trips to fit personal requirements, whether these involve dietary concerns or special interests. The USTOA survey revealed that independent customized packages scored the greatest gains in 2007 compared to 2006, with more than 80 percent of respondents reporting growth in this area. Travelers are increasingly asking for experiential or enhanced vacations. "They want new and authentic experiences, cultural enrichment, and in-depth discoveries," said Mr. Whitley. *(by David Wilkening, TravelMole e-Newsletter)*

Pump Prices May Have Peaked

The average price of gasoline took a big jump last week, but it might have been the last gasp of the recent, unrelenting stream of fuel price records. The nationwide weekly average for a gallon of regular was \$3.937, the U.S. Energy Information Administration reported Tuesday. That was up 14.6 cents since the report on May 19, and 72.8 cents more than a year ago. However, a

separate study tracking daily prices shows most of the jump came last week, petered out over the Memorial Day weekend and was barely alive Tuesday. (*Page 3B, USA Today*)